

MARRIAGE AMONG /KUNG BUSHMEN

837 the wives consent. This is regarded as a concern of the couples involved rather than a concern of society as a whole. One man said, 'If you want to sleep with someone's wife, you get him to sleep with yours, then neither of you goes after the other with poisoned arrows.'

[572] The word /kamheri was used by //Ao, one of the young hunters, to express his deep feeling of friendship for John Marshall. 'We are such friends that we are /kamheri', he said, but, as John had no wife to exchange, this remark had its funny side which delighted the men.

No actual instance of /kamheri came to our attention and we failed in finding out if it is now practised. One man in Gam lent his first wife to a unmarried friend, one of the gossips told us, because he was in love with his second and did not care any longer for the first, but this was a mere deviation from the rules, not an instance of /kamheri.

684 We heard of several irregular sexual unions in addition to the above. Rape did
837 not appear in stories or gossip. Fornication must be very rare because there is practically no one to fornicate with. Almost all females are married except very young girls and leathery old grandmothers. Adultery is the usual form for irregular unions to take. Adultery, however, is sharply limited by several deterrents. One deterrent is the incest taboo, of course, which forbids extra-marital sexual relations as rigorously as it does marriage with persons to whom the taboo is extended. The same internalized sanctions induce obedience to this rule as to the marriage regulations. The same gradation of feeling probably exists, and we expect that people comply strictly within the kindred and among close affines and are no doubt less strict with name relatives.

[586] Ease of divorce must exert a modifying influence on adulterous unions. If a married couple really want to change mates, nothing need deter them but the general difficulty of extricating themselves from the web of responsibilities which marriage entails.

● 151 In a sense, the impossibility of maintaining secrecy exerts a control over extra-marital relations. There is no privacy in a /Kung werf and the vast veld is not a cover.
153 The very life of these people depends on their being trained from childhood to look sharply at things and to take into their attention what they see, for they must
182 observe the most minute marks on vegetation to distinguish from the matted grasses the almost hair-thin brown vine stems that come up from the edible roots. Hunters memorize visual impressions and are able to follow the tracks of an individual animal in the midst of a large herd in a way that seems to us miraculous. It may be a week after a hunt that they return to recover an arrow that missed, miles from the werf, remembering where it lay in the vast monotonous sameness of grass and bush. They register every person's footprints in their minds, more vividly I am sure than we do faces, and read in the sand who walked where and how long ago.

185 The /Kung value control of anger, upholding self-control as an ideal, giving it
578 group and individual approval and training for it. Despite this, volatile tempers sometimes flare and burst out of all control. And always at hand are the little poisoned
[411] arrows. They are formidable weapons. There is no antidote for the poison; at least our /Kung informants said they know none and told us of tragic deaths from the poison which would have been averted had they had an antidote.

684 Adultery, so exceedingly provocative of anger and vengeance, could be very

/138 cont. /

342 bushes and dispense altogether with any construction.

Tree houses are unknown. In any case, they would be possible only in the Kaukau Veld (baobab), since in the Auen region proper the trees are too weak for this purpose.

Each woman has her own windscreen. If she does not have one, she will live under a special bush.

[882] Young girls and young unmarried men sometimes live in special "girls' houses" or "bachelors' houses," separated according to sex.

34 Any kind of special buildings, like meeting houses, storage rooms, and so forth, are unknown.

514 There is little neatness in the vicinity of the huts. Special toilets do not exist. The sole consideration with regard to evacuation is to be hidden from sight. One finds great accumulations of feces away from the main direction of the wind. The practice of burying excrement, common among the Herero, apparently does not occur.

768 The pontok (windscreen) is by no means a valuable possession. After the owner's death the entire horde leaves the locality. Hence any question about the inheritance of the hut is an empty one.

342 There is no door, and it would not be easy to attach one, considering the construction of the hut. In this connection it should be mentioned that things are left carelessly lying around in the settlements, even when all the people are absent. In any case a theft would be paid for with the death of the thief. Since 685 the Bushman knows the footprints of every person in the region, the culprit would always be found. In this respect the Bushman operates as reliably as the best police dog.

352 They lie upon grass covered with a few tanned hides. There 513 are no other household furnishings.

/139/

C. Food

372 The doro (fire-making instrument) (Fig. 1) consists of two round sticks of the Burkea africana. Several round, flat hollows

[Text continues on page 10]

/248 cont. /

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	Number of persons examined	Second toe extending farthest	First toe extending farthest	First and second toe extending farthest	Second and third toe extending farthest
Men	14	9	1	4	0
Women	17	11	0	3	3
Children	8	7	1	0	0
Total	39	27	2	7	3

15/ I was also able to gather some data concerning physiological conditions. By means of Snellen charts, I discovered very keen sight for all the persons examined. Threefold visual keenness was attained by all those examined, and some had even higher degrees, up to sixfold.

The ticking of a watch could be heard at a distance of three meters by most of those examined.

I have frequently observed yawning among Bushmen.

48/ The gait of the Bushmen has something very characteristic about it; in walking, they raise the knees surprisingly high, a custom that is explained by the nature of the country. Because of the low and commonly thorny shrubs through which they travel with uncovered legs, they are forced to raise their legs quite high in walking, and they maintain this gait even when they are moving across ground that has no growth on it. In addition, the achievements of these small inhabitants of the bush on the march and in running are quite enormous.

[147] Bushmen who had been sent out on patrols by the station covered a distance of 130 kilometers in less than 48 hours without displaying visible signs of fatigue. They followed the cavalry troop, which frequently broke into a trot, happily and without difficulty on foot, trotting themselves whenever the troop accelerated its pace.

20/ /249/ Extreme astonishment is expressed by opening the mouth and eyes wide. I was able to observe this myself when I played a phonograph before the unsuspecting Bushmen. When the performance was over, the audience asked me whether the people who were in the apparatus and sang there also slept in it and received their food through the horn.

FOREWORD.

X137
312 The Kalahari is not a sandy desert in the sense that it is devoid of
151 vegetation; it is the absence of surface water which makes the region such
224 a hazard to human habitation. It is the last refuge of the Bushman.
823 Primitive though he is, he survived in this inhospitable environment
124 owing to his acute powers of perception and his fine appreciation of the
gifts of nature. He is a skilled hunter with his bow and arrow and has an
intimate knowledge of the natural resources of food and water. Dr. Story
compliments him by saying that his knowledge was usually imparted
cheerfully and with humour and "always with intelligence".

121 The Division of Botany was grateful to accept the invitation for Dr.
Story to accompany the Harvard-Smithsonian-Peabody expedition of
1955. This was the fifth expedition of its kind and had as its objective
the further documentation of the way of life of the Bushman. Dr. Story's
assignment was to investigate the plants used by them in obtaining food
and water.

It is inevitable that, with the advance of civilisation, the remnants
of this interesting race will lose its intimate contact with nature and in the
end its very identity. Wishing to complete their records before this
happens the Harvard-Smithsonian-Peabody organisation, is, as we go to
press, returning on yet another expedition. The Division of Botany is
glad of this opportunity to continue the collection of data on the plants
of economic importance to the Bushmen in the Kalahari.

The balance in nature between supply and demand is of endless
interest to the ecologist. In times of plenty—when vegetation is abundant
—the animal population increases: in times of poverty—when the vegeta-
tion is reduced by the prevailing climatic conditions—the animal popula-
tion is reduced by the effects of hunger and thirst. So it is with the primi-
tive human, who is dependent for his survival on the animal and plant life
which surrounds him. Overpopulation at any time spells destruction for
him at a later date. It is obvious too, that primitive man must have had
a strong influence on the distribution and density of edible wild plants.
X137 Some will have become more widespread and others less numerous. More
and more examples of rare species among the tuberous rooted *Asclepia-
daceae* have come to light during the botanical exploration of southern
Africa. It is felt that the edibility of these and some other tuberous rooted
plants, in a large measure, accounts for their sparse distribution.

Dr. Story's observations support this view, and many other interest-
ing facts are recorded in his preliminary report on the vegetable aspect
of the Bushman's diet.

R. A. Dyer,

Chief: Division of Botany and
Director of Botanical Survey.

Pretoria,

October, 1957.

The Desert

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seen paintings, photographs, or drawings of any kind, the paintings they made for me could be said to resemble the paintings and engravings on the rocks. ¹⁷⁴

If there is a resemblance, it is not surprising. The Bushmen, together with the Hottentot peoples, are known to have lived in South Africa long before the Bantus came. At one time it all was theirs to roam in, all the riverbanks and all the grasslands, all the hills and valleys where cedar trees grow, from the Cape to Rhodesia, from Angola to Mozambique. But during the waves of the early Bantu migrations, when the taller, energetic Bantu people with their chiefs and kings, witch doctors and armies of soldiers, their metal spears and axes, shields and maces, came walking down from central Africa driving their great herds of cattle before them, the Bushmen yielded their land to the stronger newcomers, after a few struggles, surely, and most of them were either killed, enslaved, or driven farther and farther back into the most remote parts of the country, where the Bantu people and their livestock could not live. But the Bushmen are very tough and hardy, all sinew and wire, with not an extra ounce of flesh to ^[177] carry, and possess great endurance of hunger and thirst, endurance to search through the grass roots all day looking for a vegetable to eat, or endurance to chase the antelope they shoot, which may take as many as four days to die and may walk as far as a hundred miles if the arrow was not particularly well placed. Bushmen are extremely observant, too, and ¹⁷¹ can follow the spoor of their wounded antelope over the hardest ¹⁷⁴ ground or recognize it among the spoor of a herd of other antelope of its kind, and if they miss the spoor and find it again, they know from individual characteristics of the footprint that it is their antelope and no other. Even a Bushman child walking along in the veld can tell his mother's footprints, can see at once the tiniest dry stalk among the grass

● [151] that marks an edible root, or see a scorpion hidden in the dust
 174 and jump over it. So Bushmen survive in the most rigorous
 131 places; they survive in the dense, mosquito-ridden papyrus
 133 swamps of the Okovango River, steaming like a jungle and
 [84] dangerous with snakes and fever, where the River Bushmen
 live, the only Bushmen with plenty of water; they also survive
 on the vast, rolling steppes of central Bechuanaland, the
 territory of the Gikwe Bushmen, who for the nine dry months
 of the year have no water at all and do without it.

609 Besides the fact that Bushmen alone can live in the land
 563 they occupy, there is another reason for their remoteness and
 648 shyness. They are in many instances exploited by the Bantu
 farmers, and by a few of the European farmers, usually those
 who need free or almost free labor. Many Bantu farms and
 households have Bushman servants, or serfs, rather, as they
 usually come from the land on or near the farm, and when
 working they are paid nothing but are given food, tobacco,
 454 and sometimes cast-off clothing as wages. Some European
 648 farms in Bechuanaland and some in South-West Africa have
 Bushman laborers too, though most European farmers do not
 depend on Bushman labor. Those European farmers who do
 employ Bushmen usually pay wages, about ten shillings a
 month, plus a ration of food to each Bushman who is work-
 ing, though not necessarily to his family, consisting of about
 a pound of cornmeal and a quart of milk a day, meat occa-
 sionally, and weekly a ration of tobacco. Perhaps the em-
 ployer will add a set of clothing—that is, a pair of cast-off
 pants and a shirt—and perhaps a blanket every year, but oc-
 casionally they pay their labor in cast-off clothing and omit
 the ten shillings altogether.

648 European clothing is esteemed among Bushmen, for it is
 291 symbolic to them of a people mightier than themselves, and
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Toma the Leader

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ple, according to custom, and, when the old headman died,¹⁵⁹ took over the leadership of the people in the area. He was⁶²² not the true headman—his position would not be inherited⁵⁹¹ by his son, for headmanship is passed only from father to son—but he was recognized as headman while he lived and it was a great honor to him that this was so.

Tu's brother was the rightful headman of Gautscha, but⁶²² he had abdicated to live with his wife's people in the north. Her elder sister's husband, a man named Gao Big Feet, also had a right to the leadership in that his wife, Dikai, was older than Tu. But neither ever contested Toma's position as leader, for it was not a position which Toma held by force or pressure but simply by his wisdom and ability, and people prospered under him. No Bushman wants prominence, but^[73] Toma went further than most in avoiding prominence; he had almost no possessions and gave away everything that came into his hands. He was diplomatic, for in exchange for his self-imposed poverty he won the respect and following of all the people there. He enjoyed his position, and, being^[578] strangely free from the normal strains and jealousies of Bushmen, he saw justice clearly and hence he led his people well. At Gautscha his werf had been right beside the werf of his father's murderer, for Toma was friendly even with him.

Toma had a short, stocky body and a shock of tangled¹⁴² hair. He was strong, too, and very co-ordinated, so that every¹⁵⁹ motion he made was quick and controlled, and not a gesture⁶²² of his was wasted. As a result of this enormous and uncon-^[15]scious control, accidents almost never happened to him. His face was broad, lined with many deep wrinkles at the corners of his eyes and mouth as though from smiling, though it was not from smiling that he got them but from years of squinting at the sun. His expression was usually dark and wondering, his forehead drawn intently into a frown, but

621 tance, but Toma said now that he would take us to see them
someday soon because he believed that we would be able to
help them; one man in their band, a man called Short Kwi, or
sometimes Kwi the Hunter, had been bitten in the leg by a
puff adder and was very badly hurt. We got the impression
159 that he had been bitten recently and, hoping that we might
621 draw the poison from the wound, we said that we would leave
752 at once. But Toma said that it had happened during the last
rainy season, so there was no use hurrying; other Bushmen
had cut the wound and had sucked the poison, saving Short
Kwi's life, but his leg was so badly hurt that he couldn't use
it. It had turned black, said Toma, and black liquid ran out
at the wound. We thought then that there would be nothing
we could do to help; but perhaps rumor had exaggerated the
misfortune, and so we told Toma that we would certainly go
to do what we could.

224 Short Kwi came from a famous family; he was the younger
159 brother of the man who murdered Toma's father, but Short
Kwi was famous in his own right, famous as a hunter. He
often killed more game in a year than many other men kill in
their lives, a great hunter among a hunting people. The other
Bushmen told stories about him—about the time he had
killed four wildebeests in a herd of many, about the time he
had killed an eland, a wildebeest, and a wild pig all in one
day. It was his technique of hunting to be relentless in his
pursuit; therefore, if he shot an animal and suspected others
to be in the vicinity he would let the wounded animal run
where it would while he hunted on and shot another, and
another, and when all were as good as dead he would rest,
then return to pick up the trail of the one that he felt would
die the soonest. He almost never lost an animal, for his eyes
● [151] were sharp and he could follow a cold trail over hard ground
and even over stones; he could tell from fallen leaves whether

Toma the Leader

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the wind or passing feet had disarranged them; and the meat²²⁴₁₅₉ that resulted from his prolific hunting was never wasted, for¹⁵¹ ● he would bring other hunters to help him dry it, then carry it²⁵¹₄₇₆ off to a werf somewhere to share with others.

He knew the habits of animals from the ways of the largest¹⁵⁹ antelope all the way down to the smallest species of mice; in⁸²⁵ fact, he must have known animals very well, for he could always find them. He knew when he was in danger and when he was safe, and he was as brave as he was careful. Once, Short¹⁵⁹ Kwi, John, and two other hunters were tracking a bull wilde-²²⁴₁₅₇beest that one of the hunters had shot. They came upon it lying down, surrounded by a very large pride of lions. There were twenty or thirty lions in all, having got there first and claiming the wildebeest as their own, for the bushes were full of lions walking back and forth, watching several other lions brave the fallen wildebeest, still able to protect itself with its horns. The braver lions were standing near the wildebeest, obviously steeling themselves for the attack, when the hunters arrived. The Bushmen had followed the wildebeest's trail through thorns and over the parching desert and were not to be deprived, and, speaking softly to the lions, they said: "We know you are strong, Big Lions, we know you are brave, but this meat is ours and you must give it back to us."

Even after these words the lions did not give ground. Their round eyes watched the hunters and they began to growl, and the four men, quite unarmed except for their arrows and a spear (to use a spear would have been folly), said respectfully: "Great Lions, Old Lions, this meat belongs to us," and then advanced on the lions, throwing little stones and clods of dirt. The lions in the bushes began to back away, while the braver lions stood their ground until a clod struck one of them, causing him to huff and run back a little. At this, the courage of the other lions broke and they all turned and

593 Toma, that Short Kwi's wife would leave him now for a better man, but she had not and was not going to. He was, after all, the same husband, only sadder.

Later in the night we went back to talk with Short Kwi once more, to tell him that we thought he could be helped to walk again, but not that we thought his leg would have to come off, for we did not want to frighten him. Our plan was to drive him to Windhoek, the capital of South-West Africa, where he could go to a hospital and perhaps be fitted with an artificial leg. We planned eventually to tell him this, but gradually. The long grass was wet with dew when we pushed through it this time, and we were drenched. Short Kwi was still sitting where we had seen him, still beside his wife, not speaking. When we asked him if he would come with us because we believed he could be helped, he smiled such a heart-breaking smile of pure happiness that we felt sickened because we knew what he thought. His wife looked at him and smiled and then they both looked up at us and their smiles faded and their faces fell and I think that when they saw us they knew we couldn't restore his leg to him.

- 151 Early in the morning when the sky became light, misty yellow—for the sun was still swallowed by smoke—we broke camp and made a comfortable bed for Short Kwi on top of the truck, then went to the werf to get him. He and his brother-in-law were just creeping back on the path from the veld, but Short Kwi's belongings were ready, tied up in bundles by his wife. We waited a long time while Short Kwi made his way toward us, sweat standing out on his forehead although the air was cool, but, oddly, even his slow and painful creeping seemed graceful. It did not have the heaving awkwardness of movement that one associates with injured human beings, but rather the liquidity and co-ordination of a

Short Kwi the Hunter

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three-legged dog. This morning, though, he did not look at ¹⁵¹ anyone and seemed more silent even than he had been before.

The men made a carriage of their arms and lifted Short ⁴⁸² Kwi to the top of the truck, and in the process one of them ¹⁵¹ lost his footing so that Short Kwi was jounced, which must have hurt him although he did not show it, Bushmen being very good at concealing pain or despair. His wife climbed on to help make him comfortable and to receive their bundles, which were being handed up, and at the sight of this his baby ⁵² began to cry without a sound, slow tears rolling down her cheeks and dropping to the ground. I lifted the baby and tried to play with her, jumping a little and smiling to make her smile, although of course I could not cheer her, and when Short Kwi's wife looked over the truck's side the baby twisted away from me and held up her arms.

When Short Kwi was ready we asked who would come ²²⁴ with us, and most of his relatives decided to wait and join us ⁸⁵⁷ later because one of the young boys, a child of twelve or so, ⁸⁶⁶ had shot his first buck two days before and as the buck had still not been found, the people did not want to leave it. Toma's son himself wanted to remain because, it turned out, the buck had been shot with an arrow which he had given to another boy, who in turn had given it to the young hunter, and Toma's son, as original owner of the arrow, wanted his rightful share of the meat. When Toma said that his son could wait if he wanted but that we couldn't wait for him, his son turned to some other little boys who stood near him and began discussing the possibility of his joining the search for the animal. It was very interesting to see this conversation, these adult dealings beginning among the ten- and twelve-year-olds, these new, young hunters, these small figures of hope and strength, and we waited a long time while

224 Toma's son rubbed his head with his tough little fingers to
 857 make up his mind. Finally he left his friends and climbed on
 866 the truck. Home was too far to walk to, he said, and he was
 going to forfeit. As we drove away, his friends ran after us,
 shouting that they would bring him his share if they were
 able.

151 We reached Nama Pan late in the afternoon. Toma and
 152 Gao Feet cleared a werf for Short Kwi, and when he was
 757 settled comfortably with his back against a tree and with
 soft grass and blankets arranged all around him he said softly,
 just to himself and anyone else who might be listening, that
 during the night his leg had fallen off. After he said this he
 began to cry, and Gao Feet slowly crouched beside him, un-
 wound the blanket slowly, and untied the bark, then gently
 lifted the knee away from the calf, which remained on the
 ground, just like the leg of a mummy. When the calf had
 fallen off, Short Kwi had pushed the two pieces back together
 again. Short Kwi was crying and biting his hand and his wife
 was crying, and Toma and Gao Feet stood beside him for a
 minute looking, the expression on their faces as dark as night.
 766 Then they picked up the leg and carried it away to the veld,
 where they buried it in a hole, exactly as if it were a person,
 they were so sad.

152 Later, when we had dressed the stump, Toma and Gao
 Feet came back to sit with Short Kwi and talk with him. Gao
 Feet told about a Bantu man he had seen far in the north who
 had been injured in a mine accident and had been fitted with
 a false foot. Short Kwi could have one too, Gao said; but
 Toma said, almost too depressed to speak: "What does it
 matter? He is a cripple now."

521 Then the men went away and left Short Kwi to rest, and
 758 during the evening the children and young people were talk-

HUNTSMEN OF NYAE NYAE

The !Kung still practice man's oldest craft

By JOHN MARSHALL

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● 151
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HUNTING is the work of men. !Kung hunters range the land, seeking the agile game. The men walk rapidly, never lowering their eyes, making sure of the awkward ground with their dextrous feet. They glance swiftly over the distances of the country and, with their good vision and knowledge of what to look for, see any moving thing. As girls learn gathering, boys learn most of hunting on their own. They hunt little birds in the grass around the *werst* houses. They impale beetles with tiny arrows shot from toy bows. Tracking, which is the most difficult part

[411
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CHIEF WEAPONS OF !Kung are bow and poisoned arrows (in quiver, above).

[p. 45]

12: Marshall E-5 (1951-1959) 1961 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

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FIG. 5. Old /Gam making ostrich egg-shell beads. Some cowrie shells from the South Seas (via New York) dangle among her ornaments

[51]

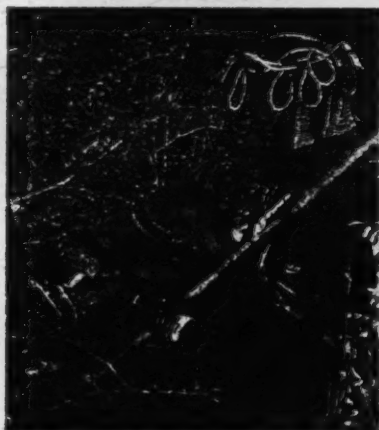


FIG. 6. Powers of observation are highly trained. This girl had seen, in the tangle of grass, a dry, hair-thin, brown vine stem which revealed that there was an edible root to be dug

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FIG. 7. Talking in the afternoon

[140]
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FIG. 8. 7-Torra laughing

[P. 240-B]

LORNA MARSHALL

249 423

The poisoned arrows of the Bushmen are as deadly
 to man as to game and they are always at hand. A mere nick and a speck of
 poison in the bloodstream can be fatal. There are no known antidotes. 628
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As skilled trackers of game, Bushmen develop their powers of visual ob-
 servation and train their visual memories to such a high degree that they
 know everyone's footprint as well as his face. This is another deterrent, for
 no one could steal veldkos without leaving his marks and having his identity
 detected. Theoretically, in !Kung society the thief may rightfully be killed by
 the person or the band from whom he has stolen, but he may fight back, and
 relatives could also become involved and the fighting would spread. In the
 opinion of the !Kung, situations likely to engender hostility are assiduously to
 be avoided, to say nothing of actual fighting. Breaches of this intention are
 very rare. 1157

Life throughout the seasons is planned around the veldkos gathering. 221
 The people know at what seasons the various veldkos will ripen and about 222
 how much each patch will yield if the rains have been good or if they have 182
 been poor. The !Kung are not, according to our way of thinking, exactly con-
 servation-minded, but they do plan to consume their veldkos in advantageous
 order. They eat the perishable short-seasoned leaves and the few fruits as 222
 soon as they ripen. They leave until the dry season is advanced certain beds
 of roots and tubers that are edible the year around if they remain in the
 ground.

The headman of the band has the authority and the duty, according to 622
 !Kung social regulations, to plan the band's movements, to say to which 222
 veldkos area they will go and when, and, if the band separates temporarily
 into segments, to know where each segment is going and, in general, what
 veldkos it will consume. It is a matter of life and death to plan and control
 as best they can and not to travel for days, counting on food and finding that
 one segment of the band has eaten it all, unbeknown to the others.

Each type of veldkos and each area presents its problems of logistics, 222
 water being the determining factor in the plans, for usually water and 312
 veldkos are not in the same place. During the big rains and for several weeks 221
 after, the pans and vlees become shallow ponds and small, temporary water
 holes are filled. It is the time of relative plenty. The people find sufficient
 water to enable them to move about with comparative freedom in their coun-
 try, wherever there is something to gather. When the dry season sets in, 1415
 the problem is to carry enough water from the water hole to the veldkos area 237
 in ostrich egg shell containers and to carry enough veldkos back to the water
 hole. It is a ceaseless labor.

The distances the !Kung travel between water and fertile areas in these 184
 gathering trips vary from a few miles to twenty or thirty. The people do not
 manage greater distances except in the rainy season, when they go as far as
 seventy-five miles to a mangetti forest.

When the people go to gather mangettis or tsf, the men always ac-